



File Code: 2670

Date: September 22, 2021

Route To: File

Subject: Forest Order No. 05-15-00-21-20 – Fire Restrictions

From: Dean A Gould, Forest Supervisor

This document explains my rationale and the regulatory basis for implementing temporary fire restrictions on the Sierra National Forest. Forest Order No. 05-15-00-21-20 will prohibit campfires; smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building; open flame devices; and the use of combustion engines off of National Forest System roads and trails. This Forest Order will be in effect from September 23, 2021, through November 15, 2021. This Order supersedes Forest Order No. 05-15-00-21-16.

I am issuing Forest Order No. 05-15-00-21-20 as I have determined that it is necessary to issue fire restrictions within the Sierra National Forest, to protect natural resources and to provide for public and employee safety. Human-caused ignitions are a significant fire management challenge for the Forest and unintentional human-caused ignitions far outnumber intentional ones. When a forest fire ignites, the proximity of the Forest to large population centers and communities within the wildland-urban interface creates a situation in which the potential for catastrophic property damage and loss of life is high. In California, over the past ten years, escaped campfires have accounted for igniting 25% of all wildfires. On the Sierra National Forest in 2020, at least 50% of the fire starts were determined to be human-caused. Reducing the number of these starts will enable us to successfully suppress the fires that do occur, while protecting the safety of our employees and the community.

Our priority is to protect the health and well-being of our first responders and the public. This means that we are taking additional precautions now to prevent wildfire ignitions on the Forest. These precautions include assessing the current availability of firefighting resources, reviewing the methods by which the agency fights fires, and issuing fire restrictions.

Scoping efforts include the Sierra National Forest Fire Management staff consulting with Forest Staff Officers, Line Officers, interagency partners, local government cooperators and the adjacent National Forests and National Parks regarding increasing fire danger across the Central Sierras.

I have concluded that this decision may be categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act. This action falls within the category identified in 36 C.F.R. § 22.6(d)(1)-prohibitions to provide short-term resource protection or to protect public health and safety – and does not require documentation in a decision memo, decision notice, or record of decision. I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with this temporary closure. Implementation of the decision may begin immediately.

Additional information to include the Sierra National Forest Fire Restrictions can be found at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/sierra/alerts-notice>, or by calling 559-297-0706.



This order includes an exemption for persons holding a Forest Permit for Use of Roads, Trails, or Areas Restricted by Regulation or Order (Form FS-7700-48). Authorization under this exemption will only be provided if I or my delegate determine that the risk to personal health and safety is reasonable considering the circumstances of the request. We may also require appropriate personal protective equipment and other necessary safety measures. I hereby delegate the authority to sign Form FS-7700-48 granting an exemption to this order to the District Rangers of the Sierra National Forest.